



State of South Carolina
Office of The Lieutenant Governor

André Bauer
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June 10, 2005
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**Lt. Governor André Bauer Ratifies Model Legislation to Boost
Number of Geriatric Practitioners in South Carolina**

Lieutenant Governor André Bauer ratified legislation creating South Carolina's Geriatrician Loan Forgiveness Program at the State House Tuesday, June 7, 2005.

Among those present for the ratification were Tom Lloyd, Speaker of the S.C. Silver Haired Legislature, which had made the geriatrician loan forgiveness program one of its top priorities. Others included Jane Wiley, SC AARP director; Norma Curtis, chair of the SC Aging Advisory Council; and Dr. Victor Hirth, medical director for the Division of Geriatric Services at Palmetto Health. Legislators included Rep. Nathan Ballentine of Irmo, author of the bill creating the loan forgiveness program, Rep. Joan Brady of Columbia, and Rep. Bob Leach of Greer.

This legislation provides incentives for more doctors to undertake an extra year of intense training using the loan repayment program. The South Carolina loan forgiveness program for geriatric physicians was approved by the General Assembly Tuesday, May 31. The legislation creates a national model to encourage doctors to undertake this special training. Most importantly, seniors will benefit because participating doctors must agree to practice in state for at least five years in return for the state forgiving their loans.

"We only have 30 geriatricians to treat the state's 500,000 patients over 65, We can now provide incentives for more doctors to undertake an extra year of intense training, thanks to legislation authored by Rep. Nathan Ballentine and Sen. Ray Cleary," Lt. Governor Bauer said.

The legislation has been sent to Governor Sanford for final approval.

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Tom Lloyd, Speaker of the S.C. Silver Haired Legislature, and Jane Wiley, State Director of the AARP in South Carolina, watch as Lt. Governor André Bauer ratifies legislation authorizing a new student loan repayment program for geriatric doctors who agree to practice in the state. Aging experts say older individuals can benefit greatly from having increased access to doctors specially trained in geriatric medicine. The issue was a priority for the SHL during the 2005 General Assembly session in Columbia.

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Lt. Governor André Bauer speaks to members of the media, immediately before ratifying Geriatric Loan Repayment legislation. Supporters of the bill include (from left to right) Rep. Bob Leach of Greer; Tom Lloyd, Speaker of the South Carolina Silver Haired Legislature; Rep. Nathan Ballentine of Irmo, the bill's lead sponsor; Dr. Victor A. Hirth, Medical Director of Geriatric Services at Palmetto Health and Associate Professor of Geriatrics at USC's School of Medicine; Jane Wiley, State Director of AARP South Carolina; Lykes S. Henderson Jr., member of the SC Aging Advisory Council and Administrator of the Presbyterian Home of SC; Ms. Margaret Brackett, Silver-Haired Legislator; Norma A. Curtis, Chair of the SC Aging Advisory Council, James Lee, a USC Medical School Resident studying Geriatric Psychiatry; and Dr. James A. Bouknight, Aging Advisory Council member.